Rajahmundry Airport

1409. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will find ways and means to make better utilisation of small airports like Rajah mundry Airport in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, what are the plans of Government to encourage airlines to serve smaller towns having access to airports?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATOIN AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) The airport at Rajahmundry is suitable for operations of HS—748 aircraft. Due to commercial and operational reasons, Vayudoot Limited had discontinued its operations from Rajahmundry airport. National Airports Authority has no immediate plans to improve this airport due to the lack of demand from airline operators.

Land acquired for txpansion of Bhubaneshwar Airport

1410. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY. Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) the total land aquired for the expansion of Bhubaneshwar Airport;

(b) the compensation paid to the persons whose land has been acquired; and

(c) the steps taken for the expansion of Bhubaneshwar Airport?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATOIN AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) The State Government has aquired approximately 70 acres of land and handed it over to National Airports Authority.

(b) The land had been acquired by the State Government of Orissa. National Airports Authority do not have the details of the compensation paid.

(c) Bhubaneshwar airport is being developed as model airport. The Plan includes extension of runway to 9000 ft. and construction of a terminal building at a cost of Rs. 24.24 crores.

Proposal for developments of Buddhists places in the country

1411. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to develop the places of Buddhist tourist interest in the country;

(b) if so, the places of Buddhist tourist interest identified, so far;

(c) the funds earmarked therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to develop Lalitgiri, Udaygiri and other places of Buddhist tourist interest in Orissa?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD): (a) and (b) With a view to develop important Buddhist Centres in the country as tourist destinations, two Task Forces were appointed by the Government which recommended 53 Buddhist Centres to be developed in a phased manner. These included the Buddhist Centres located in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar namely, Vaishali, Bodhgaya, Nalanda, Rajgir, Sarnath, Piparhawa and Saravasti and Ajanta and Ellora in Maharashtra. Government have also entered into a loan agreement with the Overseas Economic Cooperation